

A Reply to Fidel Castro's attack on Trotskyism (January 1966)

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Art Y., Forum chairman: I welcome you all to another in the series of Vanguard Forums. As most of you know we hold these here every Friday night on topics having to do with the colonial revolution, the labor movement, the antiwar movement and other topics of interest. I think tonight we have a topic of special interest, as we can see by the attendance here around us, and I am sure the attendance will get larger as the evening goes on.

This topic tonight is of extreme importance to those of us who are interested in the international situation. I think everyone here to one degree or another understands the importance of the events which go on across the seas, of the speeches which are made by foreign revolutionary leaders, of developments in other lands. We're all internationalists here, I think, and its with that understanding we're discussing this topic tonight.

I know for many of us, the Cuban Revolution was a shattering and inspiring experience; it shattered any illusions we may have had in the progressive aspects of the regime in Canada and the United States, of the possibilities for democratic transformation, particularly when these countries mounted a very fierce blockade, an invasion, a campaign of harassment and vilification against this tiny island. Many of us, I think, began then with an understanding, obtained our understanding there, of the questions of socialism, the question of the colonial revolution, and the question of social progress here in Canada.

The Forum introduction

The Cuban experience has been an extremely important one, not only the opening of the Revolution, but its entire development, (which) have explained, have clarified, have examined - the Cuban revolutionary leaders have examined themselves and admitted their mistakes, and tried to push on, to newer heights. The Revolution itself occurred at a time which made a new point of inspiration, a new spark, for the colonial revolution, and proved (able) to ignite revolutionary movements throughout all of Latin America, and to inspire the colonial masses of Africa and Asia.

And this has been borne out by the progress of the Revolution, the tremendous progress they have made, by the socialist and revolutionary direction which they have taken.

No less a part of this than the actual progress of the Revolution, has been the role of the leadership in Cuba. The one thing that has distinguished Cuba from any of the other workers' states and from any of the other colonial revolutions has been the honesty and the integrity of the Cuban revolutionary leadership. This has stood out, amid all the pressures which have been applied (against) Cuba, amidst any of the compromises it has had to make; (it) has maintained the revolutionary integrity of the Revolution. Indeed, one might say that the Cuban leadership, on the whole, were revolutionary pragmatists; that is, they had a revolutionary outlook, they were determined on the broad social aims that this Revolution had, and they were not tied to any means, nor prevented by any means in attaining them. And they found by their own experience what means were necessary, what ideology was necessary; and they explained this to the Cuban masses and to the rest of the world. I think this has been an extremely educational experience for us all. I know I certainly speak for myself when I say that. Above all, the honesty and the integrity of the Cuban leadership has stood out.

And so, we come now, to a very important event which has taken place. This attack by Fidel Castro, upon the tenets of Trotskyism so-called; and it is necessary for all of us, for revolutionaries, socialists, to examine the validity of this charge, and its implications. And that is what the forum is about tonight.

Because what we have here tonight, an attack by Castro, is an attack by the leader of the Cuban state and the head of the Cuban Communist Party, upon the most important political tendency in the Left today. I say that; I think that Trotskyism is this, because in the first place it is the

continuation of Marxism, that body of knowledge and ideas which has come down over 100 years now and which has been so borne out in practise. It is the philosophy - Trotskyism - which attempts to explain the phenomena of world events today, and attempts to answer and grapple with the key questions. And indeed, if we look at what are the key questions in the world today - what are the questions which are in peoples' minds, and what are the motive forces of social progress in the world today, you'll see that Trotskyism has a great deal to say about all of them.

Just to pick out three: to begin with, the colonial revolution, the most striking phenomenon of social change today - and we see that Trotsky very early in his career pointed out the theoretical reasons for it, and set forth the prognosis, the prediction of these to come, in his Theory of the Permanent Revolution. If we look at the question of Stalin, of question of workers' democracy, the question of events within the soviet bloc today, we again see that the philosophy of Trotskyism, the ideology, has a great deal to say on this. In Trotsky's work It is in "The Revolution Betrayed," and his description of the causes and the results of the degeneration of the Soviet Union. And of course for us, most importantly today, looking for the solution to war, looking for the path to socialism, we are particularly attracted I think by the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist aspects of Trotskyism, which are brought out most clearly in one of its most original forms in "The Transitional Program." So this broadly speaking is the philosophy of Trotskyism, the philosophy which Castro has attacked and the philosophy which has a great deal to say about the important phenomena in the world today.

The importance and relevance of Trotskyism in the world today

Indeed there are very few political questions of a major character which come up, on which Trotskyism has nothing to say, and which the ideology of Trotskyism is outside the pale. If we look around us, if we think, look at the Moscow-Peking dispute; there the charges of Trotskyism were hurled back and forth, and indeed Trotskyism was a factor, and had a great deal to say about that. We look at the controversies on the road to struggle taking place within the colonial countries, within the guerrilla movements; we find again Trotskyism has a great deal to say

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And if we look within Canada, within developments here in the labor movement in the political arena, and developments in the political parties and particularly the NDP, we find again the socialist viewpoint of Trotskyism again has a great deal to say. And so, the philosophy, the ideology of Trotskyism is extremely important - and so is Castro's attack upon it.

Indeed you might say that it bears an important similarity to the declaration of Castro that he himself and the leadership made when they realized the necessity of becoming Marxists, Marxist-Leninists, for the understanding of the progress of the Revolution. When he (delivered this declaration) a whole turn took place within Cuba, within the ideology of the party, and within the orientation of the revolutionary movements throughout Latin America.

Now, the question of Castro's attack upon Trotskyism. We might begin, in considering this, with a speech Castro made - I believe it was in 1962, I am sorry I haven't been able to locate it exactly

- but it was put out in a pamphlet which was entitled "The Revolution must be the school of unfettered thought." And in this pamphlet, Castro outlines the necessity for honesty about revolutionary ideas; the necessity not to omit ideas because they happen to be repugnant - in this case, a commentator reading the last words of a revolutionary over the Cuban radio and television (who) omitted a reference to God, because he objected - he was an atheist. And Castro attacked this concept, and put forward the opposite concept, that it is necessary to face reality as it is, however much we may disagree with them, however unpalatable they be to us; we must face reality, we must accept people's ideas as they are, and not try to debate them and change them on their own merits. And I think that is a very important point of view to maintain.

Now, what sort of opposition has Castro put forward to Trotskyism? What is the essence of his charge - is it a reasoned, analytical criticism in which he uses this method? (Does he say) they have a right to hold these positions, however much I disagree with them, the Cuban leadership disagrees with them, for the following reasons, and sets them forward so that there can be some kind of intelligent debate - well, I'm afraid not. The essence of the charges, the essence of the speeches (is) quite the contrary. Because what he has done, is that certain political positions are utilized - political positions which are claimed to be Trotskyist - and based on those political positions, an attack is launched. A slanderous attack is launched upon Trotskyism and the Fourth International - an attack which must recall to anyone's mind the attacks of Stalin, and the blood purges of the Thirties.

Castro's slanders against the Yon Sosa tendency in Guatemala

I just want to read very briefly a couple of excerpts from the speech as such, to give you a bit of the flavour of the speech as such. He is talking about the questions of strategy, the revolutionary outlook, centering around Guatemala, the Guatemalan revolution; and essentially he is making a criticism of the Yon Sosa movement, who as you know, is one of the two guerrilla movements operating in Guatemala, making the criticism of them for having a revolutionary-socialist approach as well as having a revolutionary democratic approach; and he is talking about - he is using a quote of a person which he claims is a leader of the Fourth International. "It is not absolutely casual that this gentleman, leader of the Fourth International, mentions here so arrogantly the case of Guatemala and of the Thirteenth of November Movement, because precisely in relation to this movement, Yankee imperialism has used one of its most subtle tactics to liquidate a revolutionary movement, and that was to infiltrate agents of the Fourth International. That, by ignorance - by political ignorance of the principal leader of this movement" - he means Sosa - "they made him nothing less than that thing which is discredited, that thing which is anti-historical, that thing which is fraudulent, which emanates from elements so provenly at the service of Yankee imperialism, as is the program of the Fourth International."

And it goes on; references are made in the speech to "agents of Trotskyism of whom we have no doubt are agents of imperialism." He talks about how "in this infiltration the Fourth International committed a real crime against the revolutionary movement in contaminating it with the discredited, the repugnant, nauseating thing that Trotskyism is in the political field today." And,

to conclude with this quote: "Because, if at one time Trotskyism represented an erroneous position, but a position within the field of political ideas, Trotskyism passed on, to become in succeeding years, a vulgar instrument of imperialism and of reaction."

Well, to any of you who have read Joseph Stalin's pamphlet "Mastering Bolshevism," it has a very familiar ring - it's a very close paraphrase of that pamphlet. Now that's quite a slanderous, slashing and vicious attack upon the Fourth International, upon Trotskyism. I might point out - the speaker will get into this in a little more detail - that these attacks are even the more shocking because in the first case, the positions which he attacks are not the positions of the Fourth International; and even if they were, they wouldn't justify the "counter-revolutionary" label which he slaps upon them; they would be simply erroneous ideas within the political field, and not "counter-revolutionary." But, to emphasize that these are **not** the ideas of the Trotskyist movement on a world scale.

So we come to the realization out of all of this that the Castro leadership to whom we have looked as a leadership with integrity and honesty, is in a position of falsification, of issuing a slanderous attack which has no basis in fact, of slapping labels of the utmost serious character upon a movement which again are not deserved and have no basis in fact. Now what is the result of all of this - what did it mean, why did it happen? What does it forebode exactly? Obviously it is of the greatest significance; it cannot be ignored. These are the details which the speaker is going to enter into at greater length.

Our speaker tonight is Ross Dowson, who many of you know. I know when we came to the Forum to consider who should reply to this attack, who should put forward our analysis of it, the idea came to all of our minds I think that it should be Comrade Ross, because obviously he is the person most equipped in Canada I think to answer these charges. He is a long-time Canadian Trotskyist, I think he joined the Trotskyist movement prior to World War 2, before some of us were born. He is presently National Secretary of the League for Socialist Action. So I give you Comrade Ross...

(Applause)

Ross Dowson: Comrade Chairman, comrades and friends: So far there has been very little information that has come out of Havana on the Tricontinental Congress. A few of the papers on the Left have commented on it, but their comments are very cursory. The (*West Coast Canadian Communist Party journal*) **Pacific Tribune** commented on the Tricontinental Congress, and as far as they were concerned, nothing happened at the Congress except Castro's speech against Trotskyism, and so they reproduced this speech holus-bolus with no other words on the Congress itself...

Dowson evaluates the Tricontinental Congress held in Havana

But the Congress was an important congress - it brought together several hundred delegates from across the world, from three continents, and representatives of this continent also, and it

discussed some important questions. The (*central Canada CP journal*) **Canadian Tribune** had a short report on it, and it is a little more rounded as one would anticipate, a little more serious, but it also has a considerable section devoted to Castro's attack on Trotskyism. And the **Peking Review** has come in since the Congress; it says nothing on Castro's speech against Trotskyism, the summary speech of the Congress, however it is possible that they will be dealing with it in the next issue. But they do have an extensive article on the Congress itself.

I don't intend to deal with the Congress, as important as it is, other than to say that the Congress itself, obviously, despite the sketchiness of the reports available, reflected the profound feelings of solidarity of the world's peoples with the front-line fighters against imperialism. The **Peking Review** reports that when the agenda was to be drawn up for the Congress, there was an added item to the agenda - it might seem strange to us that it wasn't there before - but nonetheless, another item was added to the agenda, and it was one of those long phrases of the Chinese - the title is, to be discussed, "Support for the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism; For the liberation of South Vietnam, and the Reunification of the whole country."

And that became the first item on the agenda of the Tricontinental Congress. There also came out of the Congress, a 5000-word General Declaration, and this was reported in part in the (Toronto daily) **Globe and Mail**, if you recall. I think all of us who read it, were inspired by it, because Castro here dealt with the Vietnamese struggle; he declared the utmost solidarity of the peoples of Cuba and of course of the persons represented at the Tricontinental Congress with the revolutionary struggles of the Vietnamese people. And (*the Globe article*) also reported a most significant aspect of the Congress, and that was contained in the General Declaration, and that declaration stressed as "an inalienable right of the peoples of the entire world, to total political independence," and to use any means of struggle, any means necessary, to win that demand, that right, including armed struggle. And that was the essence of the report that appeared in the **Globe and Mail**.

One of the most significant aspects of the Tricontinental Congress was its affirmation of the revolutionary ideology that was most powerfully expressed by the Castroist tendency throughout Latin America, and which has been identified by and large with the Trotskyist viewpoint on an international scale.

Indeed it appears that the Congress generated a great deal of enthusiasm and esteem among many of the delegates, among delegates who normally do not express views that are in harmony with the idea of armed struggle and revolutionary conflict. There is one report that Cheddi Jagan, who you will recall was a Toronto teacher a little while ago, and suffered the embarrassment when they were talking about the right of self-determination and opposition to the intervention by the big powers - he suffered the embarrassment of having to admit that he had urged the British Crown to send troops into British Guiana. At any rate, he was profoundly influenced by the sessions of the Tricontinental Congress, and he declared, to our shock I think, that the peaceful road is closed, that there is only one road open to us in British Guiana, and that's the armed struggle. I hope no one depends too much on Mr. Jagan though to come across and translate those words into deeds.

There were also many other delegates - it was a mixed bag - of delegates. There was Allende, the ex-presidential candidate for Chile, and he also reflected the atmosphere that had been generated

in the Congress, the inspiring atmosphere, and he said that insurrection was possibly not excluded in Chile. Everywhere, in all the reports that we have read, the main theme of the Tricontinental Congress was unity, unity of the peoples behind the revolutionary forces in Vietnam, unity behind the masses in struggle in Latin America, and unity of all the Left.

But this unity was to a large degree, insofar as it was involving Havana, and the Tricontinental Congress, a facade. And this was revealed very clearly in the report that appears in **Peking Review**, of the conflict that carried through the entire Congress, the conflict between the Kremlin with its peaceful co-existence line, with its being taken in with its peace overtures with the Johnson administration (over) Vietnam, with its conciliatory policy to the United Nations - this policy came into conflict all down the line with the revolutionary aspirations of many other delegates...

Castro's false claims to unity at the Tricontinental Congress

Castro boasted of this unity in the closing speech. He boasted of the success of the Tricontinental Congress in spite of the prophecies by imperialists that it would fail, due to the problems of the international communist movement. I don't think we can expect too much from the Tricontinental Congress; I think it more a sounding (board) of the feelings of the masses, reflecting the pressures of the masses on the delegates. I don't think we can expect much coming from the Tricontinental Congress. And as for the boasted unity that Castro talked about, well almost in the same breath that he talked of unity, he launched the attack which the chairman referred to against Trotskyism.

He cut across this unity, an important unity, unity with one important tendency in the Left; he cut across this unity with charges - with charges against persons who were absent and who were unable to defend themselves, who were not invited, who were not welcome to the Congress. This might - and I am sure it does - come as a surprise to all of us here tonight. We have had no inkling of such a possibility. No suggestion has ever come to our attention that the Cuban Revolution would attack Trotskyism. In fact, quite the contrary has been implicit in all the developments in the past years since the (beginning of the) Cuban Revolution. The Cuban Revolution, not by accident, has been characterized by more than one person as a Trotskyist revolution, as a revolution which has affirmed the Trotskyist viewpoint, as a revolution which has affirmed the Theory of the Permanent Revolution. And the Revolution in its subsequent evolution has generally affirmed that (view), in its revolutionary independence of the Kremlin, and its independence of Peking, and its integrity, its courage, and its identification with the armed struggle of the Latin American revolution - the extension of the revolution throughout Latin America on an international scale.

But Castro did attack Trotskyism, and he devoted some forty percent of his speech, at least, his summary speech to an attack against Trotskyism. And it is very important that we should talk about this. We should talk about it all the more in that the attack was made by a person of the stature of Castro, a man who has contributed much to the revolution throughout the world, the rebirth of the revolutionary spirit throughout the world. And this attack is all the more unpalatable to us in view of the fact that it comes from such a person who has such a sterling

record. It's all the more unpalatable to us - to all of us here in this room - no matter that some of us might disagree with the Trotskyist viewpoint, who recognize that Trotskyists not only here in Canada, but on an international scale, have stood on the forefront in the defence of the Cuban Revolution, in the popularization of its cause. That is an undeniable fact.

And if someone had handed me this report, someone I did not know, and told me this is the report of Castro's speech, I think I would have challenged the authenticity of it. Its scarcely a credible speech, particularly when we know of the brilliant orations - the revolutionary insight of these orations - that Castro has delivered on other occasions. We think of the Havana Declarations, both the First Declaration and the Second Declarations, of the speeches here before us (*on the literature table -ed.*) given by Castro; and we have an accurate translation of the speech, we are not dependent on any versions of it, versions that are picked up by persons who have hard grounds, hard difficult (opportunities) to find anything to whip up against the Trotskyists, such as the **Pacific Tribune**.

And the chairman made a few comments about some aspects of the speech. And I would like to quote a couple of them - to give you some idea of the content of the speech because it is not available to you, it hasn't been published anyplace, so I will just give you the most succinct aspects of it, the most clear characterizations that Castro makes in this rambling oration on Trotskyism. One of them the chairman referred to, and I will just read it again: "because at one time Trotskyism represented an erroneous position, but a position within the field of political ideas, Trotskyism has passed on to become in succeeding years a vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction." This is a very clear, unequivocal statement. A charge that Trotskyism, if it had legitimacy - and Castro suggested it had legitimacy at some time, for some reason - it was an opponent view, a legitimate view - it is no longer so but has become a vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction.

He refers to certain elements who have been utilized in past decades in a constant manner against the revolutionary movement, and he is referring to persons he has thus characterized as Trotskyists. He refers to elements who he says are Trotskyists, who serve as instruments for lies against our Revolution, and he talks about rescuing the Guatemalan movement from the dirty hands of those mercenaries at the service of Yankee imperialism, and he is referring to Trotskyists - persons who are mercenaries in the hands of Yankee imperialism. As I say, it is all the more necessary that we should deal with this, and we should not treat it lightly, as some kind of aberration, when it comes from such a person of such revolutionary stature as Fidel Castro.

Castro paraphrases Stalin's infamous 1937 Moscow Trials accusations

Well, I want to say a few words about the evidence that sustains Castro speech, as projected, to make a cursory examination of it. We haven't heard anything like this for many, many years - as I say, it was hard to believe that such a thing could be said, and I took occasion to glance through another document which has a certain parallel it seems to me; its a document written by Joseph Stalin, of infamy. Its called "Mastering Bolshevism." As a matter of fact it has a few words in it, a few sections, which are almost a re-phrasing of what Castro said, almost just a re-phrasing. To

proceed: "In carrying on a struggle against Trotskyist agents," Stalin said, "our Party comrades did not notice, they overlooked the fact, that present-day Trotskyism is no longer what it was, let us say seven or eight years ago; that Trotskyism and the Trotskyites have passed through a serious evolution in this period, which has utterly changed the face of Trotskyism; and in its view of the struggle against Trotskyism and the method of struggle against it, must also be utterly changed. The comrades did not notice that Trotskyism has ceased to be a political trend in the working class, that it has changed from being a political trend in the working class, which it was seven or eight years ago, into a frantic and unprincipled gang?" And it goes on, with the charges of 1937, which as you know, ended in the destruction of the entire Bolshevik cadre so patiently built up and forged in the fires of the October Revolution.

This was a speech given by Stalin in 1937, on the very (eve) of the infamous Moscow Trials. So we haven't heard any attack such as Castro's, delivered since then. What are the pretexts for such an attack? What are the circumstances, the basis of such an attack against Trotskyism? Well, Castro appeared before the audience, the assembled delegates, this broader meeting, to comment on the accumulated experiences of the Congress, and he had before him a pile of newspaper clippings of papers and periodicals. And he had gleaned from these, from various sources, allegedly Trotskyist, on the question of Che's withdrawal from Cuban politics.

You may recall that, to the astonishment of everyone, the perplexity of everyone, friend and foe, following his return from Africa, and his trips elsewhere in the cause of the Cuban Revolution, Che Guevara, the comrade-in-arms of Castro, disappeared from public life in Cuba. It was only a few months ago, after an extended silence, (that) Castro deemed it necessary to make a statement on the whereabouts of Che. The occasion was possibly thrust upon him because of course the elections, the appointments of the new leaders of the new party had been announced - and the name of Che Guevara appeared nowhere in the list. And so, Castro read a letter from Guevara, in which Guevara made an extravagant and very powerful, very dramatic identity with Castro as the primary leader of the Revolution, and (gave) an affirmation of his continued identity with the Revolution; but at any rate the summary of the letter was that Guevara was going elsewhere at the cause of the Revolution; he was clearing all the responsibility of the Cubans for his actions; and the obvious implication was that he was going to perhaps somewhere in Latin America, perhaps somewhere in Africa, to carry forward the struggle which he had participated in, in Cuba. So, we have this situation: that Castro pulled out a great many papers and clippings which dealt with alleged Trotskyists on the significance of Che's withdrawal from the battle scene in Cuba.

So, we have charges: in the first case that Castro takes up is that of Filipe Albaguante (or Alvahuante, in a UPI report of an **El Universal** article). And Castro read from a bourgeois paper, a Mexican daily, one of the big bourgeois papers in Mexico City, a statement that appeared in this paper over the name of this person. The paper reported - claimed - that this man was a leader of the Mexican Trotskyist movement, and Castro accepted this and presented this as a fact to the delegates, and went on to quote a statement that appeared in this bourgeois paper made by this person. And the statement made by this person was to the effect that Che Guevara had been liquidated by Castro for insisting that Cuba follow the Chinese line. And Castro went on to say that this, naturally, was part of a campaign that the Trotskyist elements started, everywhere, simultaneously. .

The real position of the Fourth International on Che Guevara

Now this man is somewhat of a mystery. The primary evidence that Castro presents of the Trotskyist guilt in this area: he is reported to have two names, one name in one press, and another name in another paper. At any rate, very quickly, the Mexican section of the Fourth International made a statement and sent a wire to Castro, that this person had never been a member of the Trotskyist movement in Mexico. And this statement was supplemented by another statement made by Pierre Frank in the name of the leading body of the Fourth International, that this person had never been heard of by the F.I. And so Castro threw into the scramble here a charge involving a person who has no connection with the Trotskyist movement whatsoever, in any shape or form. And this (was the) evidence presented by Castro as evidence of a campaign of Trotskyist elements started everywhere, simultaneously.

Not only is this person of no substantial character at all, or does the evidence presented by Castro not have any substantial character at all to bear up the charges, but the position of the Trotskyists, the official world Trotskyist movement, on Guevara's departure, is very clear, and is of quite a totally different order. And so I checked back in the pages of **Quatrieme Internationale**, which is the official organ of the Fourth International, and they have an article on Guevara: "Guevara goes to a new field of battle." It is a most interesting article; and perhaps because my French isn't good and perhaps your French also, I've got an English translation of it, and I will just read one part of what we have to say, just one part, to give you (a bit) of the way the official organ of the Fourth International, commenting on Guevara's taking off from the Cuban arena. "Is it so extraordinary to conceive that a revolutionist like Guevara dedicating himself to personal responsibility in such a course? There is nothing of revolutionary romanticism in it at all. It is the same dedication to a great cause that made him a socialist in the first place, and which gives meaning for existence to every revolutionary socialist in the world today, because, besides, Guevara has taken some of the toughest assignments in the Cuban Revolution, serving as a kind of trouble-shooter from the start."

So that short quotation I think will give you the essential line of the article, which was: that Guevara, at the behest of Castro - which Castro himself said - has taken on new arenas of struggle, and of course as you know, since the Declarations of Havana, the Latin American revolution, so promising, so turbulent, has not delivered, and the schism between the workers' states, between (Moscow) and Peking, has continued to have a debilitating effect on the development of the world revolution. And so this article presented the situation as one that Guevara was taking an assignment to intervene actively, with his talents, with his dedication, with his commitments, to intervene effectively and powerfully in the cause of the Cuban Revolution in the international arena.

And there is nothing there at all that so much as hints at anything of Castro's charge. And that isn't the way the **Workers Vanguard** (*journal of the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere, Canadian section of the Fourth International*) handled it, either, the way Castro

suggested - nor the way the **Militant** (*journal of the Socialist Workers Party, the U.S. sympathizing section of the Fourth International*) handled it. None of the organs of the Fourth International handled the Guevara incident the way that Castro charges that the Trotskyists dealt with it. .

Castro's attack on the independent U.S. journal *Monthly Review*

And now we come to the second case, and that deals with Adolpho Gilly. I think most of you know of Gilly; most of you are aware of his writings in **Monthly Review**, an independent socialist journal in the United States, which for many years was part of the Kremlin apologists, but in the light of the experience of the Cuban Revolution above all, there has been a profound evolution take place in the political ideologies expressed by **Monthly Review (MR)** is an independent organ of socialist opinion, and Adolpho Gilly has written for it, on Cuba; he has written for it on the Guatemalan struggle, and as a matter of fact he has had several articles in the recent period dealing with the guerrilla struggle in various sections of the Latin American continent. Castro says he is a known theoretician of Trotskyism - there is no evidence of this whatsoever. He is a known contributor to **MR**, but he is not a known theoretician of Trotskyism in any way, shape or form. And the articles which Castro refers to, as evidence of his views, which he paraphrases, are the Uruguayan magazine **Marcha** and an Italian paper called **Nuovo Mondo**. And these are not Trotskyist papers, although Castro suggests they are Trotskyist papers.

Those of you who have read Gilly I am sure have appreciated his critical contributions to our education, particularly on the problems of the guerrilla struggle on the Latin American continent. His contributions are speculative; possibly some of us have disagreed with many aspects of them. Castro doesn't deal with Gilly's views, doesn't deal with them at all, but they certainly are not to be characterized as Castro characterizes Trotskyism, for when he says that he is a well-known theoretician of Trotskyism, then of course you also must add to it "a mercenary of imperialism." Anybody who has read Gilly's articles knows that they are serious contributions to the education of the revolutionary vanguard, to an understanding of the problems of the revolution in Cuba, which is **our** revolution, and to an understanding of the problems of the Latin American revolution, which is **our** revolution.

Gilly he later connects openly with **Monthly Review**, in a subsequent part of his speech, and therefore I don't see how Castro by any stretch of the imagination can characterize Gilly as a well-known theoretician of Trotskyism, because Castro knows fully well what **MR** is. If you read **MR** you will be aware that the co-editors of this journal are one Leo Huberman and another one is Paul Sweezey, and they have written one of the most important, certainly one of the most influential writings in defence of the Cuban Revolution. It is on their imprint, published by **MR**: "Cuba, The Anatomy of a Revolution." So Castro well knows what their view is - he met them, in fact in that edition if I recall correctly there is a picture of Castro standing side-by-side with Huberman and Sweezey, if I'm not mistaken - Castro knows who they are, and he knows this journal is not a document, is not a theoretical journal of Trotskyism in any shape or form.

Then Castro comes to his third piece of evidence, and he quotes extensively from a couple of journals, from a journal called **Bataille**, a Spanish newspaper, and another organ which he does not name but which he calls "the official organ of the Argentinian Trotskyists" - and another Italian organ called **Lucha Operaria**, and I think he also quotes some other newspaper which he characterizes as Trotskyist - and he quotes them extensively, particularly one of them - **Lucha Operaria**. The comments in these journals are worthy of attention. One might well not agree with them; as a matter of fact I must say that we disagree with many of the comments that appear in these journals which Castro brings to the attention of the persons who celebrated the wind-up of the Tricontinental Congress. But these papers are not organs of the Fourth International. Anybody who is familiar about what's going on in the Left, anybody who reads the journals of the Left, who reads the **Militant**, who reads the **Vanguard**, and who reads other papers which no doubt get into Cuba, he cannot help but be aware that they are not organs of the Fourth International - they are organs of a split-off from the FI, a split-off headed by one J. Posada. It's no secret, this split-off in the Trotskyist movement, the movement kept no secret about it, it disagreed with the views of that person, Posada, and it dissociated itself from the views of Posada.

More "Trotskyist" publications, and the case of the Posada tendency

Doesn't Castro in Cuba know about this division? - this split-off in the Trotskyist movement? Well it wasn't long ago that we were able to report in the **Vanguard** that the Cuba supporters of the Posada tendency were released from prison in Cuba. They had been imprisoned in Cuba, and they were released from prison, and they were assured the right of admission in the new party organized by Castro. Surely Castro must know about this division, this split-off from the Trotskyist movement. Che Guevara certainly knew. Che Guevara met other leaders of the international Trotskyist movement, he met Moreno, who is the leader of the Argentinian movement; and in the coming issue of the **Militant** there is an extensive statement by Moreno about Guevara with whom is on personally friendly terms, and his evaluation of the leaving of Guevara from the battle scene in Cuba. Guevara also revealed his full awareness of this division when he commented on the martyrdom, on the struggle which had been launched and carried by another leader of the Fourth International, one Hugo Blanco of Peru, who remains now almost three years in prison without trial. And Guevara made a statement about Hugo Blanco in his contribution during his trip in Algeria to one of the official organs of the Algerian revolutionary movement.

And one can't help but feel, when one reads the document, that Castro well knows Posada also; he knows who Posada is; the Posadist tendency we have clearly demarked ourselves from. We consider this a sectarian tendency, this split-off tendency from the Trotskyist movement - an adventuristic tendency, and I think on occasion we have mentioned some of its views. One of its recent statements was that it was looking forward and anticipating with great jubilation, the nuclear destruction of the centres of capitalist power such as Washington, and New York, and London. And then the masses in the colonial revolution, according to Posada, in the light of this awesome destruction of the great centres of proletarian power, would move out fearlessly against capitalism and the revolutionary climax would take place. We dissociated ourselves from their

concept of preventative nuclear war by the Soviet government. And Castro I think understands this, and it is revealed in the statement he made to the Tricontinental Congress in which he calls a certain person "a gentleman leader of the Fourth International." He goes on to say "a gentleman who is a businessman," and I am not up-to-date about all the gossip about this man Posada, but I understood when I participated in some of the discussions in one of the congresses of the FI, that this man was a man of some mysterious means who was a gentleman and who was a businessman - and Castro thereby in his comments reveals a little insight which very few of us have of the character of J. Posada. But enough - Posada is not a Trotskyist; Guevara knows he's not a Trotskyist, and Castro knows he's not a Trotskyist, and if he does not know its his responsibility to know what he's talking about as a revolutionary leader of the world working class.

So much for the charges - so much for the evidence that Castro presents against the Trotskyists - as mercenaries of imperialism, as enemies of the Cuban Revolution. But perhaps even more significant are his comments on the revolution in Guatemala, and the tasks of the revolution in Guatemala. You see, Castro does not attack the ideology of Trotskyism **anywhere** in his speech, except implicitly when he discusses the problems of the revolution in Guatemala, in which he disagrees with (Marco Antonio) Yon Sosa (youthful leader of the MR13) and with Gilly, who has written one of the more detailed articles on the Guatemalan revolution. There Castro implicitly attacks the ideology of Trotskyism, and I might add, in my opinion as a bit of a student of the Second Declaration of Havana, Castro attacks the ideology of the Cuban Revolution as expressed in the Havana Declarations.

Castro denounces the revolutionary Guatemalan tendency of Yon Sosa

He has quite a section on the situation in Guatemala. He talks about Yon Sosa. Perhaps a few of you know about Yon Sosa and the movement which he heads; and I think it is worth taking a little time to talk about it because this, as I say, this part of the speech may be more significant than any other section of his speech. It may be more revealing. He starts off with his comments on Guatemala with the statement that Yankee imperialism has used one of its most subtle tactics to liquidate a revolutionary movement, and that was to infiltrate agents of the Fourth International into the Guatemalan revolutionary forces. And he characterizes, as the chairman mentioned, Yon Sosa as a dupe, as a well-meaning, an honest revolutionary who it is hoped will return to the fold, but is a dupe of the Fourth International, the Trotskyist movement. And he goes on to say, the Fourth International, they made him nothing less than that thing that is discredited, that thing that is anti-historical, that thing which is fraudulent, which emanates from elements so proven at the service of imperialism as is the program of the Fourth International.

And so, we are talking about program, in this case. So I referred to - if you have a copy, I think you should look it up - the **Monthly Review** of May 1965 in which Adolpho Gilly deals with the nature of the revolutionary movement - the guerrilla movement in Guatemala. And this is the most important and most inspiring force in the whole guerrilla front throughout Latin America. It

is the opinion of Gilly that this is the most significant guerrilla movement in Latin America. He describes its character - sort of affirms Guevara's comments - I seem to recall some time ago that Guevara happened to be in Guatemala at the time of the coup against Arbenz, and he fled into the streets, he burst into the streets, appealing for the people to take arms and to fight, and of course the Arbenz regime went down without a fight. But out of the Arbenz experience was forged a guerrilla struggle, a guerrilla force, and this force came under the leadership of Juan Sosa.

I'll deal with Castro's views a little later - but I will just refer to a few sections of the pamphlet by Gilly in which he comments on the program of the Yon Sosa forces, the MR13 - this is the name of the movement - the Revolutionary Movement of November 13. He characterizes this movement as the most inspiring one of all the guerrilla movements in Latin America. He says "we have in this movement, for the first time in Latin America, one that openly declares its socialist objectives, that this is without doubt due to the influence of the world revolutionary process, and the Cuban socialist revolution."

Isn't that what Castro declares in "The Second Havana Declaration"? It is necessary to take the socialist path in Latin America. And what is the general character of the guerrilla movement in Latin America outside of this phenomenon? So, Gilly goes on to talk about the MR13 movement. He said "it was in this atmosphere that the leadership of MR13 underwent a period of internal transformation, from a nationalist and anti-imperialist orientation, which is a characteristic of most of the guerrilla forces - purely nationalist and anti-imperialist - this movement to an acceptance of Marxism as a method of analysis and action, and socialism as a goal of struggle; from a concept of anti-feudal-democratic revolution it moved to a program of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist revolution, of socialist revolution; and following the path of the socialist revolution of China and Cuba, of a government of workers and peasants, as a goal of the revolutionary struggle."

Now, I didn't bring with me a copy of the "Second Havana Declaration" but I recall it well; I recall well the direction it laid out; it tried to inspire the guerrilla fighters in mountains of Latin America; it tried to give to them the lessons of its own revolution; where, as you recall, Castro started off as a liberal; and in the process of experience, pragmatically as the chairman said, he moved with the revolutionary forces pushed him, and the Revolution took a Marxist-Leninist direction. It took a socialist direction, and Castro in many of his declarations, denounced those who saw the struggle on the Latin American continent as merely being one that is anti-feudalist, as merely being one of a democratic character, fighting for some kind of representative government; and that idea jelled firmly in Guatemala, because they had already had that experience; they had the Arbenz experience. So there we had for the first time, as Gilly said, a guerrilla movement which took fully and completely the ideology of the Cuban Revolution.

Smearing them all: the MR13 as "dupes of US mercenaries - the Trotskyists"

And what does Castro have to say about this movement? Well, he comes out in opposition to the leader of this movement. And he comes out in support of another current, one led by Louisiez

Turquioz (*phonetic spelling -ed.*) And Castro made some comments about the nature of this movement - he attacked of course the Yon Sosa movement for in essence being sectarian, for having fallen into the hands of the Fourth International. And he talked about this other movement (♦) - the translation isn't to the best of English, I'm afraid - at any rate, he talked about this other movement. He said "this movement has the merit of saving the Guatemalan revolution from one of the most subtle and perfidious of Yankee imperialism, in raising the revolutionary banners of Guatemala and its anti-imperialist movement; rescuing it from the dirty hands of those mercenaries." And he goes on to talk about how it (*the movement Castro has chosen to support*) is a **broad** movement. So these gentlemen think that for example, in relation to South Vietnam - so he slips this in too, on Vietnam - he goes on to say this movement is a broad movement which will encompass all other progressives and revolutionary sectors, and in essence he attacks it as (adopting) a revolutionary character, taking a character which poses the issue of socialism, and the seizure of power, and placing that power in the hands of the workers and peasants. And he attacks the Sosa movement as one he claims is isolated from the rest of the people, isolating it from the masses, discrediting it, and he calls for it to take a course totally different from "The Second Declaration of Havana" (which) called upon the peasants and guerrilla fighters in Latin America.

There is one other attack he makes against Gilly - the person who he says is a theoretical leader of Trotskyism, but who is (*in reality, simply -ed.*) a top-flight revolutionary journalist writing for **Monthly Review**. And he takes up a comment in an article by Gilly which I have not been able to locate, but in which Gilly comments on the interrelation of the Cuban Revolution and the Guatemalan revolution. And Gilly suggests that the Cuban Revolution didn't do all that it could, that it should, in terms of identification with the revolution in Santo Domingo. That's a debatable question; it's possible that the Cuban Revolution didn't do all it could, all it should - the views of Gilly are not presented, there are four or five lines in which he suggested that they didn't do all they should have. There was internal pressure for a policy of more active support, and Cuba didn't respond. And Castro attempts to make an answer, and it is the only place where he attempts to make an answer to any of the statements of the various forces allegedly Trotskyist, largely, whose views he expounds, he presents.

And I must say the answer he gives is an utter distortion, a hysterical distortion. While Gilly rather tentatively suggests that all was not done, Castro challenges him: "should we have launched aid, of forces, should we have stopped the landing of American troops," etc., etc., and he presents such ultimatic demands that might have been made by some fanatic, some irrational person, completely out of touch with the power of American imperialism; he presents these demands, and suggests these demands are unreasonable, and therefore Mr. Gilly has made a scandalous and villainous challenge of the Cuban Revolution. And he accused Gilly of villainy, when Gilly raises this problem of support of the revolution in the Dominican Republic.

And so you can see, without going into much more detail - I think I have covered the highlights of the speech - that we have here a very far-reaching attack against Trotskyism, an attack which I think it is obvious has no substance in fact, which presents no evidence, which presents false witnesses, and which by and large is devoid of ideology, devoid of a discussion of political principles, of the issues at stake in any of the questions involved. .

Wither the Cuban Revolution after this scurrilous, slanderous attack?

And so we must ask ourselves: is this scurrilous, this infamous and this slanderous attack against a tendency in the revolutionary socialist movement - is this episode, while a painful one, just a temporary one - just an episode? Or is it a turning point, an event which ends up one whole period, and opens up new ones for the Cuban Revolution?

Well first I would like to say that it is very necessary for revolutionary socialists to act responsibly, to act cautiously, in drawing conclusions about the significance of this speech. The worst thing of course for revolutionaries would be, by this token, to write off the Cuban Revolution, in any way, shape or form; or to write off the revolutionary leadership, even Castro as a revolutionary leader. It is easy to speculate; it is easy to comment, make penetrating, witty and scintillating observations about this phenomena we see before us. But what we really need to see is what it really means in life, in real life. We are not dilettantes; we, as the Fourth International has always acted responsibly with regard to the Cuban Revolution. We have been very aware and very sensitive of all the currents and nuances that have been developing within the Cuban Revolution, and have acted responsibly in this respect; and we haven't drawn... (*end of track*)

(track 2) (The Cuban Revolution is)... a living and a dynamic Revolution, and as such it reflects all the forces, all the difficulties and all the aspirations that confront the Cuban peoples. It was only a few months ago, much to my astonishment, I must say, that the Cuban government, in its official print shops, published a speech by Che Guevara, a speech that I had been searching for, most avidly, for some months. I'd heard about this speech by Che Guevara; it had been reported in a fragmentary way, in an Algerian paper, at the time of Che's visit in Algeria; and subsequently a friend brought a clipping from Cuba in which there was another section of his speech, but it had no date, it had no source; and so again, we didn't have this speech at our disposal. .

Guevara's scathing criticism of Moscow...

What were we researching this speech for? It is the most interesting speech; and I hope its on the literature stand there; I'm not sure of the title - it's one of those long titles - at any rate, it is an interview that Guevara had with reporters in which he talks about the relationship between workers' states (*the Soviets, China and the Asian and Eastern European "satellite states," and Cuba -ed.*) , and it is an extremely sharp attack, not a veiled one, not a restrained attack against the Soviet bureaucracy - against the Soviet bureaucracy for its exploitative relations with other workers' states, and with the developing workers' struggles - an extremely sharp attack.

And I am sure there was some speculation in Cuba, and for certain among circles that I move in, that it was this speech that possibly threw Guevara into the backwaters, temporarily, because of its compromising character for the Cuban government; for everybody knows that the Cuban government is very - unfortunately - heavily dependent for trade and for economic aid from the Soviet bloc, particularly from the Soviet Union.

And here we have a speech which is a very clear, a very incisive attack against this inferior position that the Soviet bureaucracy has put the workers' states and the under-developed countries in; and which Castro (*RD means to say Guevara -ed.*) challenges them to rise to their

responsibilities as revolutionaries, and to aid revolutionary forces to overcome their material difficulties which they inherited from imperialist exploitation.

And this speech is published by the Cuban government, only a month or so ago. So when we talk about the significance of Castro's latest speech, this scurrilous attack against Trotskyism, I think we need to caution ourselves, and think seriously of the tremendous reserves of the Cuban Revolution; the revolutionary masses of Cuba, which everyone has noted, and which Castro himself has noted - I think he almost paraphrased some of Lenin's phrases about how the masses are more advanced than the Party - Castro has on many occasions talked about the revolutionary intransigence and the will to struggle of the Cuban masses; how this was forged in Playa Giron (*the US-mercenary Bay of Pigs invasion*) and how this has not been undone; and I think we should be aware of the tremendous impact of this revolutionary mass off the shores of American imperialism, on its leadership.

...and Castro's previous polemics against bureaucracy and sectarianism

And I think we should also recall to mind the intransigence of this leadership - its independence, the independence it has displayed under the greatest difficulties. Recall the Escalante speech, in which Castro moved out very boldly against the leader of the Communist Party, against the old Stalinist elements, and kicked them out of the country; undid all the bad work they did; their sectarian efforts to build a clique, a machine, instead a political party of the masses. And recall also, Castro's very independent position during the missile crisis, when he castigated Khrushchev and rejected any interference by the United Nations for inspection of the missile sites on Cuban soil. And then recall the two or three speeches that Castro made, not once, twice - I think three times - speeches in which he castigated both Peking and the Soviet bureaucracy for their treachery, their failure to measure up to their responsibilities as revolutionary leaders in defence of the Vietnamese peoples.

That's something we should not forget, when we think of this speech. So I would like to say a few words, although I know they are preliminary words. And I know they are highly speculative words, about the "why" of this speech.

One might say since it is motivated by a series of quotations about the whereabouts of Guevara, and about the circumstances surrounding Guevara's disappearance, that the speech might well reflect a certain embarrassment with regards to Che Guevara; and I think we are all aware that there are important differences between Castro and Guevara - that there are important differences in this revolutionary leadership. It is **inevitable** that there should be important differences in this revolutionary leadership; and that Guevara has been a man who has more firmly identified himself in opposition to the Soviet bureaucracy, with its whole mish-mash of "peaceful co-existence" and class-collaborationism.

Perhaps Castro attempts to clear himself of the embarrassment surrounding the circumstances of Guevara's withdrawal from the Cuban scene - because the Cuban Revolution is not over. The problems of the Cuban Revolution have not been surmounted. So perhaps Castro is trying to remove himself from this embarrassment. Could he consider that unimportant - such a speech? A speech against the Trotskyist movement - could he consider such a speech as unimportant? Perhaps he does; it is possible that Castro considers an attack against the Trotskyist movement - which doesn't hold power, which only made one revolution - which made the Russian Revolution, under the leadership of Leon Trotsky - a revolution which has undergone

tremendous degeneration - perhaps Castro considers that it's okay, it's not so dangerous, it's not so complicating and implicating, to attack the Trotskyists, who are a minority tendency throughout the world, in various sectors of the world, but not in power, with no economic weight, with no vast resources at its disposal which they can trade, and dicker and maneuver in relation to other working class movements, if they were so inclined - perhaps Castro feels that it's possible to make such statements and that they are not very important statements. That's one speculation.

Did Castro want to clear himself of "Cuban Trotskyism" charges?

It's also been hinted that Castro wanted to clear himself of the charge of "Trotskyism" - because Castro has been charged with "Trotskyism" on many, many occasions - it's a recurring charge that has been handed against the Cuban Revolution. Yevtushenko, suffered - when he returned from Cuba and he talked about the élan and spirit of the Cuban Revolution and contrasted the Cuban Revolution to the Russian Revolution - the atmosphere that now exists in the Soviet Union, the atmosphere of passivity, conformity and non-involvement of the masses. There is no doubt about it, that the main line of the Cuban Revolution couldn't help but be looked upon in some light - in minds of some - as to be an affirmation of the Trotskyist viewpoint. A curious twist Castroism is, in some people's minds, some version of Trotskyism - an international out-looking Revolution, which understands the need for the revolutionary path to power, which has identified itself with other revolutionary currents, is prepared to work with them.

I think the Continental Congress line poses this embarrassment for Castro in relationship to the Soviet bureaucracy, which opposes the line that came out of the Continental Congress. So Castro has to clear himself of a charge of "Trotskyism" - that's a speculative possibility. This has been a technique, you know; it was the technique of persons who feared McCarthy (*the 1950s U.S. congressional sweeping red-baiting drive -ed.*) persecution, who fear harassment by (reactionary) forces; that's a weak and "chicken" method of operation, and one could scarcely think of attributing it to Castro, but this has been suggested.

So it is not excluded that Castro attacks Trotskyism to clear himself of charges of Trotskyism, or the hint or suggestion of Trotskyism. Just as it didn't work when persons ran before the McCarthyite Commission, it won't work if Castro thought it would, in his case. Then, and I think another more probable, a much more reasonable, point of speculation, is that it signifies a further capitulation to the Kremlin. Insofar as the departure, from the principled course that Castro has sought to follow and has followed up until now, it would indicate that Cuba is becoming more dependent upon the Soviet government, in the face of the failure of the revolutions in Latin America. And, of course as you recall, Castro opened the Tricontinental Congress with a revelation, that China had cut off its pact of trade with rice, to switch rice with sugar, a very important commitment that Castro claimed the Chinese were involved in with the Cuban government - I think it involved about 30% of the rice consumed in Cuba, and a considerable amount of the sugar crop which Cuba was required to export. Castro threw this into the opening days of the Tricontinental Congress.

We might have to reconsider some of the comments that were made at the time, and the significance of this; it might have been a form of blackmail by Castro against the Chinese, because the Chinese have denied that they carried out such a rupture; they deny that they were at any time committed as Castro said they were to such a deal, that it was a one-shot operation. And so this statement by Castro could well have been a bit of a pay-off to the Soviet bureaucracy - an

anti-Peking dig - and it would have considerable effect on the delegates I would think, to think that the Cuban Revolution was so imperilled by what is alleged to be the cynicism and the ruthlessness of the Peking government; and so I think that we might consider that an attack against Trotskyism, of such a traditional Stalinist character, could be - and I think that this is the most probable explanation - a further capitulation to the Kremlin which has such a powerful grip over the economy of the tiny Cuban Revolutionary forces.

Possibly in the process of discussion tonight, other ideas were projected, and I think we will have to attempt to seriously understand the significance of this speech. I would like to say a few words about the possible repercussions of it. I think we must all (consider) now: what does this mean for Cuba? What does an attack against Trotskyism usually signify? What has it signified in the Soviet Union? What has it signified in the New Democratic Party? It's quite a different world - but I think there are certain parallels we might draw here - what has the charge of Trotskyism traditionally meant?

What does this attack mean for democracy in Cuba - and Latin America?

Well, I think it was Huberman (*co-editor of **Monthly Review**, New York - ed.*) just a short while ago, on his return from another trip to Cuba, commented about a change in atmosphere in Cuba during his last visit. He talked about the atmosphere on university campuses; he talked about a certain pressure to conform that was being developed and laid down before the student body. He expressed some fears about this, and I think we could well have some fears of attacks against Trotskyism. An attack by Castro, an attack which is going to have wide publicity, and which has had wide publicity, over Radio Havana, and in the press and TV in Cuba; that such an attack can signify a further tightening of the atmosphere in Cuba, a further restraint of democratic processes, freedom of discussion and an exchange of views in Cuba.

That's indeed an ominous thing to contemplate, because we know, we share the belief that Castro expressed in his comments that the chairman referred to, in a memorial address to Echevarria (*a student militant who died in 1957 in the anti-Batista struggles, and from whose obituary an official omitted a religious reference by him -ed.*) "we want all things to be discussed" - that's the view of the Revolution, that all views are heard out, that the Revolution finds its way to resolve its contradictions, and to reconcile them.

And what about the repercussions in Latin America? Well, we can wonder what is going to happen in the sub-committees of the Tricontinental Congress; when the delegates go back and set up committees in various countries in Latin America, committees which are going to discuss the problems of the Latin American revolution. Is the atmosphere going to be, around these committees, which are supposedly to attract all the revolutionary forces - is the atmosphere going to be an anti-Trotskyist atmosphere? And who is free from the charge of "Trotskyism"? Who's free from it? Castro freed nobody from the charge of "Trotskyism." As a matter of fact he has used the term "Trotskyism" not as a scientific definition, of an ideology or a viewpoint, except by implication in the case of the discussion on nature of the forces in the Guatemalan revolution, but he has used it as a label, as a smear. He certainly used it as smear against Gilly. And so, it doesn't bode too well, we can think, for the future course in the immediate period of the Latin American revolution and the building of the revolutionary cadres in Latin America

And who does it hurt? Well you know when the student tour, in Canada here, organized by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, was dumped (*suddenly cancelled by the Cubans without*

explanation - ed.) , I met various persons who thought it was a **good** thing - they got a great bang out of it. They thought it was a real **blow** against the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which for various reasons they held a certain amount of hostility to. But I think if they thought a little bit about it, they could only consider that it was a blow against the Cuban Revolution. It was a blow against the work of those who are trying to popularize and familiarize the working people of this country - particularly the student youth - with the great achievements of the Cuban Revolution. That's what was involved there, and that's why I might venture to say the Fair Play for Cuba Committee protested, as was its right and responsibility, as a supporter of the Cuban Revolution, as a partisan of the Cuban Revolution - that's why it protested the abolition of the student tour - as a friend of the Revolution, because it considered that this hurt the cause of the Revolution.

And that's I think what we must say about Castro's attack on Trotskyism. Who does it hurt? Perhaps some will say it hurts Trotskyism. As a matter of fact that's what one can conclude from the **Pacific Tribune** (*the Stalinist press in BC*) which so quickly grasped this as the whole, the being, and the essence of the Continental Congress - an attack against Trotskyism. They've had a hard time finding any material of any merit, of any worth, to use against the Trotskyist movement, but now they've got Castro - they've found Castro, this great revolutionary leader, attacking Trotskyism. So they are going to use it for all its worth. In their stupidity, in their obtuseness, they think it hurts the Trotskyist movement.

Ultimately the cause of the Cuban Revolution is hurt by these slanders

Well, I for one wouldn't say it doesn't hurt the Trotskyist movement - it hurts the Trotskyist movement; it hurts the Trotskyist movement insofar as the Trotskyist movement is an integral part of the Cuban Revolution, of the world socialist movement. In my opinion you cannot separate the two - what hurts the Trotskyist movement hurts the Cuban Revolution. You know, there is one thing about the Cuban Revolution, as the chairman commented on in his preliminary remarks, it's been an inspiration for the people of this country, particularly for the people of North America, with their scepticism, with their cynicism. The great attractiveness of the Cuban Revolution has been the integrity of the Cuban leadership - no matter what the problems, about the difficulties which confront it, everybody who had any honesty couldn't help admire the integrity of the Cuban revolutionary leadership. And by this attack on Trotskyism, the integrity of the Cuban Revolution, the leadership of the Cuban Revolution, has been gravely compromised, because **nobody** in this country, **nobody** in North America believes that the Trotskyists are mercenaries of imperialism. Nobody believes that - they may think they're sectarians; (*laughter from audience*) they may think they're ultraleftists, they may think they're petit-bourgeois, they may think they're a whole host of things, they may think they are wrong on a thousand counts, but nobody believes that they are mercenaries of imperialism - I don't believe so, I have never heard this said, and I never got the payoff, furthermore! (*general laughter from audience*) That we're mercenaries - I don't believe that anybody is going to believe anything that Castro has said in this speech - **nobody's** going to believe it.

Those days are gone, you know, when Stalin could say that - and all his henchmen could say what they will, and the Trotskyists had to take it on the chin, they had to bear with it and they had to wait for the historic justification, for historic vindication, which came, which came as we knew it would. Nobody is going to take what Castro said, nobody's going to believe it, and therefore Castro has committed a terrible crime against himself as a revolutionary leader, and he has committed a crime against the Cuban Revolution.

And so I would say that Castro has to rectify this mistake - no matter what the reasons, no matter what the excuses, no matter what apologies, what motivations he can present to us, he has to repudiate this speech, and he has to repudiate it in the interests of the truth, because as Castro said very clearly and which we have stood firmly by his side in, the truth is the greatest instrument of the proletarian revolution, and nobody can violate that truth, not even the Castro leadership. And this truth will out, and the Revolution will go forward.

Thank you (*applause*)

Question & Answer period: Few reliable details on the Congress itself

Q: Do you have any information on how the speech was received by delegates at the Tricontinental Congress?

RD: Well, there's only one report that gives any suggestions - that's the report in the **Pacific Tribune**, and they record that there was "tumultuous applause." Many of the delegates to the Tricontinental Congress were delegates whose positions are very far from the revolutionary positions. There were representatives of Allende there, who is nothing but a bourgeois liberal. A lot of the delegates were pretty well stacked; there was a fight over the seating of delegates; the Cubans apparently took a very strong stand and refused the official delegates of the Indonesian government, which is now carrying on a vicious murder purge against members of the Communist Party and the Left in Indonesia and they refused to seat them, but it is interesting that they came; it sort of reveals what other kinds of delegates either got in or tried to get in; but I don't think that as a delegated body it was very reflective of the broad currents and tendencies of the revolutionary left - it was highly selective♦ I don't have much information on the delegates; I did see some data and I think someone here does know; we have been reading through issues of **Granma** (*journal of the Cuban armed forces*) which came to us by airmail (♦)

Q: (*Vernel Olson*) We might just say that the official Cuban text that appeared in **Granma** listed all the points of applause and one would get the impression that it was received very warmly by the delegates.

Q: (*Hans M.*) The Cuban government has been carrying on several campaigns against bureaucratism and red tape, and also the debate on the question of moral versus material incentives has come to a head and in fact was decided on in the course of last year. It would seem to me that any strong pressures by the Kremlin would obviously have an influence on the outcome of any discussion on the struggle against bureaucracy♦ and I wonder if we have any late information which would indicate one way or the other of any effect on the outcome of the debate.

RD: We have no information whatsoever; very little information comes from Cuba as you know. The pictures in magazines don't deal with these problems, and we get the **Economic Review** but it doesn't deal with problems of Cuba, and even **Cuba Socialista** is very abstract - it seems to me that most of these discussions have not been carried openly and there hasn't been an open exchange of opinions, and very many of these questions have not been openly debated - perhaps someone else might know - I don't read Spanish either, unfortunately.

Q: (*John S.*) The papers have reported that the Soviet Union is going to convene a conference of communist parties to deal with the split between China and the Soviet Union (what do you think) this speech by Castro means for this conference?

The Congress seen as a victory for Cuban policy on armed struggle, but...

Ross Dowson: Well, there's been a bit of speculation about the overall significance of the Conference and I did read some of the reports to the effect that it was a victory for Cuba, since Cuba retained the site of the continuing body. There was a big conflict over the nature of the Congress, and the Soviet delegates were in essence trying to liquidate this organization into their various international, peripheral and stooge fronts; and the Chinese fought against this. And this position, which apparently the Chinese carried the main effort along, prevailed. And Castro is reported in the article by Frank Libby Park in the **Tribune** as expressing considerable jubilation about this situation - what the imperialists expected least would happen. "A Tricontinental organization has been set up, the Conference represents the hopes of the people" etc., etc. And what surprised them even more is that Cuba has been named as temporary headquarters of the new solidarity organization until the next Tricontinental Congress is held. Now Park expresses his disappointment in their article; they apparently support the Soviet position of liquidation of the Congress but they report Castro as being "extremely jubilant" that Cuba is the centre of the continuation of this body. And the general impression that I have gained is that the Tricontinental Congress as a whole has been considered to be a victory for the Cubans, but in many ways that's because of the revolutionary line of the Congress adopted - its position in defence of the armed struggle, the commitment of the Congress to the armed struggle, which of course the world knows, that the Soviet representatives give lip service but don't intend to put into practice and don't intend to deliver on. So overall I think that the Congress can be considered, in general, as a victory for the Cubans in the overall political arena. That's why I suggested - I thought some persons reacted to somewhat sceptically - that Castro Trotsky-baited in order to clear himself from the "Trotskyist" charge. I think there's some weight in that, in light of the interpretation - the general interpretation - that the Congress was a victory for the Cubans, as against the Soviets. It did pay off.

Chair Further questions?

Q. My question was on the same line, as you just mentioned (After reading the **Peking Review** and seeing how they express the tension that did go on in the Tricontinental Congress, between the Soviet position and the Chinese position, after seeing this and after seeing the Chinese denouncement of the Russian peaceful-coexistence positions, tried to prevail in the Congress. A suggestion was made to me by a friend that possibly that Castro made this Trotsky-baiting attack to sort of bring forth unity - how would you consider this suggestion?

RD: Well, the Chinese are well-known anti-Trotskyists. As a matter of fact I think (*Joseph Hansen (SWP leader writing in **World Outlook**)* in his article reveals that Aidit (*Indonesian CP leader P.K. Aidit whose support of Sukarno led to the slaughter of his party*) who unfortunately has apparently lost his life along with the leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party due to their false policies which the Chinese supported - he has been a long-time Trotsky-baiter; and I suppose there might be some basis for this - that this would have a certain "unifying character."

... the doubtful credentials of many delegates raises some questions

I'd like to suggest before we pursue this idea, that the Congress itself I don't think is too significant, in itself. You see, these Congresses can pass all the resolutions they want, and Allende and Cheddi Jagan can make all the statements they want - first, Jagan represents nothing; Allende doesn't represent any revolutionary force; so, the passage of resolutions doesn't mean very much except that they set a certain legitimacy, a certain climate; what's necessary of course is to carry the line, and in order to carry the line you have to have a revolutionary party, and none of these forces, or very few of them, have the perspective of building a revolutionary party, of carrying out a revolutionary struggle for power. That's the most important thing to note; I think that they - now, there's other things that these Congresses do, you know, they lay all kinds of bases and grounds for deals and maneuvers, to consummate certain relationships - now, these things aren't to be known by us. There's more goes on underneath, like the iceberg, at these congresses, than reveals itself at the top. The days of honest and open revolutionary confrontation have been long passed; the days of the Comintern under Lenin and Trotsky where there was an open exchange of views with the documents of contenting views were published and discussed fraternally throughout the world movement - nobody dared propose some interfering in the Cuban Revolution, like the Progressive Workers Movement talks about the Trotskyists as if this revolution wasn't our revolution, that we couldn't talk about it; nobody ever talked like that; nobody ever talked in the revolutionary days of building a **national** revolutionary party which didn't concern itself about the problems of the world revolution; that didn't have an international program; that didn't commit itself on the big issues in debate and dispute in the world revolutionary movement, on the decisive questions, in which all the national issues are resolved.

So we have these congresses - a lot of them are phoney, a lot of the delegates are phoney, and we're going to have to wait, it seems to me, we're going to have some further experiences, but you know what **did** happen - for instance, the Chinese document as I read it, is not unlike many of their other documents, full of all kinds of fulminations, clichés and verbal mongering, you know - there's very little information. One of the most interesting shortcomings in all this, was the votes. The Chinese talked about what forces they represented, and they talked about the delegates from Java and from so-and-so but they never tell us what the Cuban vote was, which is of course most interesting, but not reported - none of the Latin American votes, on any of the questions, was given in the **Peking Review** - so you really don't know from reading the **Peking Review** what forces there really were there. They talk in terms of the parties which are beholden to them; and the Chinese have lost their influence in the Latin American parties, which was apparently very promising at one time - I would conclude that, from this and other information I've got. So it's very difficult to tell and we haven't got the information at this time - for instance when the **Militant** (SWP-USA) was writing their material, they didn't even have the speech - they had not yet got the Castro speech. There no doubt will be reports coming up, because I don't doubt for a moment there are revolutionary elements who are going to write their experiences up in the various journals in Latin America and we're going to be able to get hold of them. But we're not really able to know what took place there.

Q: Since the attack was made at the Tricontinental Congress, I think that this is quite significant, and whatever the reason, I think the result will be to weaken the revolutionary tendencies in Latin America and using the tremendous prestige of the Cuban Revolution to do it. You said at

one point in your talk that this speech frees nobody from the charge of Trotskyism; for instance you talk about the two tendencies in Guatemala, and it was seen that this speech would certainly support one tendency against the other.

Nobody is clear of the charge of "Trotskyism" on the Latin American Left

RD: The charges were against the Sosa forces of being Trotskyist or dupes of Trotskyism, so it doesn't free anybody, or any revolutionary current, from the charge of Trotskyism. In this case, Castro has (made charges against) a unmistakably revolutionary current, which has been implementing the Second Declaration of Havana line - he charged it with Trotskyism. This is why I thought that this is perhaps the most significant aspect of the speech; because this is the most politically revealing part of his speech - the rest is just slander and vilification, just crap, that's all it is. But here is something of some political significance - now, just where this is going, is hard to say. But it is a significant commentary. Just one more point: one could suggest that Castro - a person could speculate - that Castro has given up the revolutionary perspective in Latin America - although that violates the decisions of the Tricontinental Congress, and that's why I don't think we should say it, or can say it. I don't think we should say it or can say it. We have to act responsibly in this situation. I think the Guatemalan evidence is worth noting, but I think we should be very restrained and modest in drawing any conclusions. I think we need some experience in life, yet. I think we should see what the reply is going to be, of the Sosa forces, and see how the debate will ensue ♦ its going to launch a debate; you can be sure the Guatemalans are going to launch a debate among the Latin American revolutionary forces.

Chair: I'll take a couple more questions and then I will open the floor for a brief discussion period. There's one right at the back, there.

Q: I came in a little late; you say that there were delegations from the Guatemalan revolutionaries from the FALN ♦ and from the (♦) revolutionaries (supporting) the armed struggle against the domestic bourgeoisie as well as foreign ones, and there were delegations from Africa which would also take the line - from South Africa, who would also take the line against the domestic bourgeoisie as well as foreign monopoly.

RD: I can't give you too much, but the delegate from South Africa was from the African National Congress, which supports the Soviet position all down the line. As a matter of fact the **Peking Review** reports his participation in debate. According to **Peking Review**, this delegate wanted the Congress to go on record as fighting for the implementation of all United Nations declarations, and the Chinese attacked this quite correctly, and attacked the United Nations as an instrument of imperialism (♦) Now I heard that there were delegates from various sections of the Trotskyist movement - I heard this some while ago - they had been invited. Now whether they did get the formal invitation and whether they went, I do not know. The delegate from Guatemala was this right-wing element - not the social force, but the other force, which Castro commended for their bourgeois liberal position and for their splitting from the revolutionary force - this person was the delegate. Castro gestured to him when he got applause and made very commendatory statements about him, and held him up as an example to the other delegates - this is treachery, in my opinion. So it was quite a mixed bag. In general, I would think that the revolutionary forces were small in number in the Congress - those who were conscious,

vanguard, revolutionary elements - they were small in number. (Those who were) for Allende - I don't think they were atypical; and the Indonesian delegate was going to be a representative of the murderous military caste - well I guess that's not atypical since they would even have the nerve to even send a delegate; to anticipate that he might get accepted says something to me.

Chair: One more question❖

Q. I was wondering❖ Generally you don't discuss something unless its significant - the amount of time and the tone of this speech indicates to me there must be some significance in it - does this imply that there is a greater recognition of the strength of the Fourth International than there has been for some time?

Denouncing Trotskyism devastates anti-Stalinism in the workers states

RD: It depends how you evaluate what its use was for - if it's just a decoy it is not attributed to the significance of the movement; it's an alarm, if it's a significant capitulation to the Soviet bureaucracy, it has some significance as to the strength of Trotskyism - don't think for a moment that Trotskyism isn't an issue in the Soviet Union - in Poland. As a matter of fact, in the next issue of **World Outlook** reports - I suppose you know that there are some important trials taking place in Poland involving some revolutionary youth who have been found guilty of circulating Trotskyist views and other dissident views - one is the son of the former premier of Poland, a leading communist - in the latest report there was another intellectual who was brought before the court, and it was reported in **Le Monde** if I am not mistaken, that he openly declared himself to be a Trotskyist; he was sentenced to jail, and the court was turned into quite a demonstration - apparently persons in agreement with his views were in considerable numbers in the court - and when he was sentenced, he sang "The International" and everybody in the crowd joined in, in "The International," which isn't exactly the hymn of the Polish government (*laughter*) - there's no doubt about it, that Trotskyism is an phenomenon of considerable significance and importance in the workers' states. I think this may well be a partial explanation of Castro's attack - this would be very valuable to the Soviet bureaucracy in Poland, in East Germany, to have Castro denounce Trotskyism, because the prestige of the Cuban Revolution is very high, particularly among the youth, among the revolutionary youth in these countries - very high. This would be quite valuable - to use this speech by Castro.

Chair: Now, we're going to open the discussion session. If those who would like to contribute to the discussion, we will give them three minutes; please keep it to that because time is getting on. I would also like to ask the person responsible for brewing the coffee to put it on now.

(contributions from the audience follow for a half-hour)

*(See also "Fidel Castro's Attack on the Fourth International" by Ross Dowson in **Workers' Vanguard**, #116, Mid-Jan. 1966 appearing in the Journals section of this website).*